

The Story of "Mari, Waters of Life"

The monument, *Mari*, celebrates all the waters of our earth. *Mari* is each renewing rain, every flowing spring, the bright streams, the powerful rivers, the sweet lakes, and the great oceans that cover most of the surface of our beautiful planet. The monument honors how water is precious and essential to all life on earth.

Mari is an ancient name for the ocean. Many modern words still express this root word *Mari* -- as an example marine, and maritime. In the German language, Meer means the sea and in the old Norse tongue there is the word Merr. Many place names throughout the Middle East, Europe and into Africa also reflect this name, Mari; for instance, Mari, Mar and Marian.

We, as the people of our planet, share the earth's life giving waters in common. This fact of our unity is represented in the statue by the earth medallions that adorn *Mari's* belt. The earth medallions show us that it is the oceans that interconnect us on every continent.

The great waters have been our roadways since ancient times. The world's oceans and rivers have guided humans around our planet and in our discovery of the different continents and one another. The column that stands next to *Mari* represents the relationship humans have with the water, particularly the history of the many sea-going peoples and their wondrous vessels of travel.

Mari's column honors the diversity of cultures worldwide by displaying images of ships, both ancient and modern, from every land. This column reaches back through history to Europe, Africa, Australia, the Americas, the Orient and many civilizations. At one time, the Greeks built large stone columns close to the ocean shores. Carved upon these columns were stories of the ancient mariners. Native peoples of the Americas have built wondrous totem poles that relate the histories of their tribes, including their relationship with the water and sea travels.

Throughout time, people from around the world have recognized water as a symbol of life and humans have trusted that the great waters would feed us and care for us. This ever-giving power of nourishment is symbolized in the monument by one of the oldest ocean mammals, the whale.

The *Mari* Monument is dedicated to the care and health of all waters. There will be eight statues placed in cities worldwide signifying that all people share our life giving waters in common, and that we can all unify in our shared respect for each other and life.

--Osprey Orielle Lake ©

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